

## Research Statement for ERA Peer Review of Non-Traditional Research Outputs

**The City Wit by Richard Brome**

**Directed by Associate Professor Kim Durban.**

**University of Ballarat**

### **1. Research Background**

One seventeenth century Caroline playwright largely ignored by official stage history is Richard Brome, who has been perceived as a lesser playwright than his apparent mentor Ben Jonson. Having directed his play *The City Wit*, I reveal through an analysis of my directorial dramaturgy that he was a master playwright, and also, by investigating the double vision of the director who looks back to the past and forward to the present for inspiration, I tease out the position of a contemporary practitioner engaging with notions of historiography.

### **2. Research Contribution**

The major significance of performance research into Richard Brome's plays is to provide evidence of how they work, with examination of setting, character development, staging resolutions, textual issues and questions of directorial interpretation. There are also key dilemmas for a practising twenty-first century director, including the tension between notions of historical performance and modern styles of acting; the meaning of meta-theatricality; the erosion of language skills in contemporary theatre as this affects the delivery and reception of seventeenth century text; and the question of 'relevance' which bedevils the interpretive actions of any modern director.

### **3. Research Significance**

The Performance Research significance of this production comes from creating a fully-fledged performance which adds to recorded stage history of Brome's plays. The production was invited to be presented at the international symposium "Richard Brome and the Caroline Stage" held at Royal Holloway in London in 2007.